



THE *Vital 7*™  
VIDEO SERIES

3 QUESTIONS TO  
PREVENT REINJURY

# Why do you keep getting injured?



Cassidy Moore, PMA® CPT

One of the most common questions I get from clients is “Why do I keep getting injured?” I’ve answered this so many times; it’s such a common theme among my clientele. Trust me, you are not alone when it comes to this experience. I’m sure you have asked yourself, What is going on? Why am I in this vexing cycle of injury, recovery, injury, recovery...I have some insight for you on how to make this whole process more sustainable with less injury.

**Cassidy** has been a certified Pilates instructor since 1999 and has worked with hundreds of clients with injuries and/or chronic pain. She believes in invoking your personal spirit, activating your inner strength and helping you fall in love with life again.

## One injury can affect your whole body.

As I have said to many of my clients, your body is connected, it is integrated, so once you suffer an injury to one part of the body, it affects the whole. Immediately after an injury occurs, your [central nervous system](#) (CNS) basically shuts down the injured muscles to prevent further damage to it and starts to create muscle compensation patterns (MCP) so you can continue to function. This chain reaction is an automatic response, it will happen. Muscles will take over for a job that they are not primarily meant to do which can cause additional stress on them and referred pain in your body which is why it’s important to look at your whole body when recovering from an injury and /or dealing with chronic pain.

## What is a muscle compensation pattern (MCP) and why does it matter?

It’s how your body compensates for weak muscles. Your CNS instantly determines what other muscles must be brought into the movement in order to make it happen because the injured muscle(s) have shut down or are too weak to do it on their own. These adaptations are automatic and sometimes too subtle for you to detect. You may unconsciously avoid movement that once caused you pain so you may not realize you have lost function because you complete the task using different movements. This is when it can be very helpful and effective to seek expert professional guidance because they can help you realize the subtle adaptations you have been using.

Until your [MCP](#) gets addressed and broken back down, you will continue moving throughout the day, all day, everyday in this new movement pattern because your CNS does NOT revert back to the way you used to move before the injury. Your CNS does not have a memory so the current MCP you are using becomes the new normal.

It’s also important to think about your general health when recovering from an injury. Rest and nutrition are also an essential piece of the puzzle to achieve full recovery.



# So, what does this all mean?

Say you're playing with your kids or hiking maybe, and you hurt your back. You feel an acute pain in the area of the injury and curl over in agony. It is at this moment that the central nervous system starts its survival instinct and your injured back muscles get shut down. You can't just lie there forever. You have to find a way to get up, and move again, so your CNS creates a muscle compensation pattern to help your body regain function.

You have gotten up off of the floor, thanks to your CNS and the muscle compensation pattern it created. You may or may not notice that you're moving in a different way. (It depends upon the severity of the injury.) Maybe you go the doctor, get some pain meds, or maybe you just wait it out and the pain slowly fades away. Either way, you are moving in this new pattern. You're going to the gym, maybe working with a personal trainer or physical therapist to help gain strength and get back to the way you were, but you don't. You can't, not until your MCP gets addressed and broken down. In the meantime life goes on and is still just as demanding.

**Ok, so why I am getting re-injured? How does this new movement pattern and life's demands correlate with getting re-injured?**

As I mentioned before, your CNS does not revert back to the old movement pattern even after you have healed. Remember your CNS does not have a memory so the current MCP you are using becomes the new normal. You're still moving in this new pattern, creating new stresses and demands on your muscles that which can prevent you from making long-term progress. So you're going about in life with these new stressors in your body and more than likely, unaware of them because they're too subtle to notice. Recovery takes time in the areas that the CNS does not revert back to the old way of moving before the injury occurred. On top of that, life doesn't slow down when you have been injured. You're still as busy as ever, work is crazy, the kids are fun but exhausting plus your stress levels are higher than before due to the injury.

## Recovery is also about what you're doing when you're not training.

Are you getting a good night's sleep? Are you eating well? **Recovery is not just about training, it's also about what you're doing when you're not training. Sleep deprivation and poor food choices hinders performance and your overall health.** [Lack of sleep](#) can affect your ability to think clearly, slow down your physical progress, and it can affect your mood. [Poor nutrition](#) can cause lethargy in your body, affecting your capabilities at work and other physical activities you do, and over time, it can contribute to the risk of developing health problems. So the combination of these new muscle stressors, lack of rest and good nutrition can lead to re-injury either in the same area or somewhere different.

# How do you break the cycle?

What do you do to break this vexing cycle? How do you make a difference for the better?

First thing, slow down. Make sure you are getting enough rest and eating well. **Taking care of your health is a priority.**

When you start training begin slowly with basic exercises to make sure you are able to access the correct muscles to deconstruct the MCP your CNS has created.

## Test and measure your progress as you go.

Ask yourself these questions: Are you gaining, losing or stuck in your range of motion? You should be gaining range of motion. If not, make sure you are looking at the surrounding muscles of the tight area to see if they are working and strong enough to keep up with the demand.

Are the left and right side working the same? Is one side weaker than the other? You want both sides to be able to do the task. When training take the time to work both sides individually so you can compare. If you find one side is weaker than the other, focus more on the weaker side. Make sure you continue to test each side. Once they feel balanced then start working more symmetrically. Lastly, pain is a cue that the MCP is still there, remember it takes time to fully recover and gain back the function and strength of the muscles the CNS turned off when you were originally injured. The changes can be too subtle for you to realize and it may help to seek expert advice before creating your own recovery program.

## Finally, look into your past to consider your old injuries.

Look into your past.

Are you addressing old injuries that you thought were long gone? Remember you could be in an old MCP created years ago.

Simply put, to fully recover from an injury, prevent re-injury and break the cycle, you need to eat and sleep well as well as unravel the muscle compensation patterns your central nervous system has created.



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